164. h. 35

THE

WISE MAN OF THE EAST.

A PLAY, IN FIVE ACTS,

PERFORM ING AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

FROM THE

GERMAN OF KOTZEBUE.

BY

MRS. INCHBALD.

THE SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW;

BY S. HAMILTON, FALCON-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

1799.

[*Price Two Shillings.*]

ADVERTISEMENT.

"THE Wise Man of the East" is an alteration of Kotzebue's comedy, called "The Writing Desk;" a literal translation of which is at the same time published.

The purchaser of "The Writing Desk" will not find in that play the family of the Quakers; the intended seduction of Ellen; or any of the consequent distress which is produced by that incident, and which constitutes the effect of the interview between Metland and Claransforth in the fifth act. But, in place of those scenes, the critic and admirer of German literature will, probably, meet with others more worthy of his approbation. He will also find in Kotzebue an incident relating to a fraudulent bond, which was originally in the altered play, but which has been omitted since the first night of representation.

PROLOGUE.

PROLOGUE.

BY A FRIEND.

A MUSE, who oft, by favour's cheering light,
Hath trod ſecure thro' many an anxious night;
Who oft hath ſu'd to you, in ſuppliant tone,
For a poor progeny, confeſs'd her own;
Now, for a German offspring, aſks your bleſſing,
And begs to anſwer only for it's dreſſing.
E'en this ſhe dreads, and does not hope to rouze
The kind applauſe that crown'd her laſt-year's Vows *.
But ſtill ſhe truſts, behind great Kotz'bue's ſhield,
By your protecting aid, to keep the field.
Tho' here no gorgeous decorations try,
Regardleſs of the mind, to catch the eye;
Tho' not one flouriſh, or of trumps or drums,
To the charm'd ears, proclaims a hero comes;
Be ours the hope, that paſſion, well expreſs'd,
In plaineſt garb, will reach the feeling breaſt.

Ne'er will your hearts the mean diſtinction know,
That ſcorns to ſympathiſe with humble woe:—
The generous impulſe yours which laughs outright,
Nor waits till faſhion ſtamps the jeſt polite.
Perchance, to-night, ſome critics, ſtern and cold,
May think our drama's features much too bold;
May think our incidents, with truth at ſtrife,
Too widely deviate from the path of life:—
But ſay, ſhall Genius, in her warm career,
Be ſicklied o'er with the pale caſt of fear,
And her free efforts find no licence here?

Say, do events in ſuch nice order run,
That true and probable are *always* one?
If, whilſt we trace the paſſions to the ſource,
We ſwerve a little from the common courſe;
Yet, ſhould we win, by no immoral art,
Spontaneous ſmiles, and melt the pitying heart,
Bluſh not to yield to Feeling's gentle ſway,
Nor doubt 'tis Truth commands when you obey.

* "Lovers Vows," performed laſt year.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

Sir RICHARD CHANCES -	*Mr. Clermont.*
AVA THOANDA - - -	*Mr. Munden.*
CLARANSFORTH - -	*Mr. Lewis.*
Mr. METLAND - - -	*Mr. Murray.*
ENSIGN METLAND - -	*Mr. H. Johnstone.*
TIMOTHY STARCH - -	*Mr. Knight.*
LAWLEY - - -	*Mr. Waddy.*
BANKWELL - - - -	*Mr. Davenport.*
WAITBY - - - -	*Mr. Klanert.*
QUAKER SERVANT - -	*Mr. Simmons.*
SERVANT to AVA - -	*Mr. Abbot.*
SERVANT to LADY MARY -	*Mr. Curtis.*

WOMEN.

LADY MARY DIAMOND -	*Mrs. Davenport.*
Mrs. METLAND - -	*Mrs. Johnson.*
ELLEN METLAND - -	*Miss Murray.*
RACHEL STARCH - -	*Mrs. Mattocks.*
RUTH STARCH - -	*Mrs. H. Johnstone.*

Servants, &c.

SCENE, London.

WISE MAN OF THE EAST.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *An apartment at* Claransforth's.

Enter Sir Richard Chances, *followed by* Waitby.

WAITBY.

I SHOULD be very glad to announce you Sir; but when Mr. Bankwell went into the next chamber, he ſaid he was going to tranſact buſineſs, and deſired my maſter and he might not be interrupted.

Sir RICHARD.

And do you obey your maſter's clerk?

WAITBY.

He is, I aſſure you, Sir, a man of importance in this houſe. All the money to ſupply our wants comes through his hands; and he is for ever warning my maſter againſt extravagance, and moſt particularly againſt gaming.

Sir RICHARD.

Then, perhaps, he will not come to our party to-night: but be ſure to tell him he is expected at Lady Mary's in the evening, and that Sir Richard Chances himſelf left this card.

WAITBY.

I will, Sir. [*Laying it on the table and liſtening.*] I hear them very loud—my maſter flies from one room to another to get rid of Bankwell,—

but the old man will purſue him. Come into this room, Sir.

[*Exeunt* Sir Richard *and* Waitby.

Enter Claransforth, *followed by* Bankwell.

CLARANSFORTH.

I think, Sir, I am too old to be lectur'd for my indiſcretions.

BANKWELL.

Too old, perhaps, to profit by admonition; and certainly too old for youthful exceſſes.

CLARANSFORTH.

Sir, I was robb'd of my early pleaſures. The time of youthful happineſs and folly was ſeiz'd from my eager graſp by the ſeverity of a rigid father:—Why not let me have my follies at a proper age? But it was your wiſe maſter's management to invert nature; to force me to be a man while I was a child;—conſequently, I am a child now I'm a man.

BANKWELL.

A counting-houſe was ſurely a proper academy for the ſon and heir of a merchant.

CLARANSFORTH.

But, why ſo ſtrict, that I was not permitted to live in my native country;—but ſhipp'd to a gloomy town acroſs the Atlantic, where there was no ſuch thing as folly or miſdemeanor in the whole place.—Was it not beyond all doubt, that, when I return'd to London, the charming novelty of doing wrong wou'd overbalance all the force of habit?

BANKWELL.

It was your early propenſity to pleaſure which induc'd your father——

CLARANSFRTH.

To forbid my taſting it.

BANKWELL.

BANKWELL.

His firſt wiſh was for your happineſs.

CLARANSFORTH.

And don't I make myſelf happy?

BANKWELL.

Through improper means.—Let me intreat you to forſake your preſent companions, and ſeek out ſome pretty girl——

CLARANSFORTH.

—My dear friend, with all my heart.—This is a piece of advice I highly approve.—Hah! I perceive your notions and mine don't differ ſo very widely.

BANKWELL.

Pſha! Pſha! I mean, ſeek out ſome ſober, modeſt young woman, and marry.

CLARANSFORTH. [*Walks about.*]

Marry! marry!—You diſtreſs me. It's ſingular Bankwell;—but ſo it is, that of all the women I have ſeen, ſince the few months I have been in England, the woman I ſhould prefer as a wife I *cannot* marry.

BANKWELL.

Becauſe ſhe is married already I ſuppoſe.

CLARANSFORTH.

No;—but ſhe is not worth a guinea.

BANKWELL.

So much the better, ſince you are worth a million.

CLARANSFORTH.

Would you have me marry a ſervant-maid?

BANKWELL.

Sooner than I'd have you betray a ſervant-maid.

CLARANSFORTH.

Betray!—What you call *betraying* is only ſaying a few things, to a woman, that are not to

be relied upon as truth, any more than when your ſervant tells an impertinent viſitor you are gone out, while you are at home.

BANKWELL.

I can talk no more, and keep my temper; yet there are other ſubjects on which I truſt we may agree.—Your heart was formerly open to compaſſion.

CLARANSFORTH.

Formerly, Bankwell! [*With reproach.*]

BANKWELL.

When a ſchool-boy.

CLARANSFORTH.

Suppoſe me, in the inſtance of compaſſion, a ſchool-boy ſtill;—and you ſhall be my tutor.

BANKWELL.

I have been inform'd that old Mr. Metland is in great diſtreſs.

CLARANSFORTH.

How can I relieve him?

BANKWELL.

Poor man! You recollect him?

CLARANSFORTH.

I recollect he was my father's intimate friend.

BANKWELL.

You recollect alſo in what manner this unfortunate man loſt his all?

CLARANSFORTH.

I have heard you ſay, in our houſe.

BANKWELL.

The ſudden death of your father has thrown a veil over the event, which heaven alone can ſee through; but for my part I am convinced myſelf of Mr. Metland's depoſition.—He never told a lie.

CLARANSFORTH.

What can I do for him?

BANKWELL.

BANKWELL.

I think it an act of duty that you ſupport him: in what manner, I leave to your own diſcretion.

CLARANSFORTH.

I will remember your advice, and determine what to do in a few days,—but at preſent I have ſuch a number of petitioners, and applications of every kind.

BANKWELL.

There is another ſubject on which I have to ſpeak to you.—Your father paſſed his youth in India, and had many friends there. One of them, a native of a remote country, beyond our ſettlements, has been in London theſe four months; and at various places where he and I have met, he has given me teſtimony of the warm affection which, in their youth, ſubſiſted between him and your father: he even ſays, he came over for the purpoſe of paying him a viſit, when he found him in his grave. He has requeſted the favour of being introduced to you. He came with me now to your houſe, and is waiting in hopes of an interview.

CLARANSFORTH.

Let him inſtantly be admitted: a friend of my father's muſt always be welcome.

BANKWELL.

He ſpeaks Engliſh very well; but he is dreſſed in his country's faſhion, and aſſumes the rough manners of a philoſopher. [*Exit.*

CLARANSFORTH [*taking a card from the table*].

"Pharo this evening at Lady Mary Diamond's,"—A more than uſual ſolicitation to be preſent—ſuperfluous invitation! Where my Ellen reſides, I could, with equal warmth, ſue for admiſſion.

Re-enter

Re-enter Bankwell, *introducing an elderly gentleman, who has a dark Indian complexion, a long beard, and is dreſſed after the Eaſtern manner.*

BANKWELL.

Ava Thoanoa, a native of Cambodia, beyond the Ganges.

CLARANSFORTH.

Sir, you do me honour; and I only lament that your reception here is by a repreſentative wholly unworthy of your deceaſed friend, my honoured father.

AVA.

If you ſpeak as you think, why not make yourſelf worthy of him?

BANKWELL.

Ava Thoanoa uſes no ceremony: he ſoon becomes acquainted; and, by your permiſſion, Sir, I will leave him with you, while I ſtep to the counting-houſe.—I will return immediately.

[*Exit.*

[Claransforth *draws chairs, and* Ava *and he ſit.*]

AVA.

But, perhaps, Sir, it is to the little reſemblance you have to your father, except, indeed, in perſon, that you owe what you are pleaſed to call the honour of this viſit; for I am an unſociable man, and ſeldom go into company, but for ſome particular purpoſe.

CLARANSFORTH.

Your viſit to me, I underſtand, was merely in compliment to my father's memory.

AVA.

In duty to his memory.—But this is not the firſt time you and I have met.

CLARANSFORTH.

I beg your pardon:—I never remember having ſeen you before.

AVA.

Becauſe I have generally met you where there were

were pretty women, and they took up all your attention.

CLARANSFORTH.

But, then, I ſhou'd conceive you took up all theirs—and conſequently I ſhou'd attend to what they did.

AVA.

I engag'd their attention while I had money left. When I came firſt from India, I was rich, and welcome every where—but now that I am poor——

CLARANSFORTH.

My father's friend—and reduced to poverty in a ſtrange country! What can I do to oblige you?

AVA.

Reform!

CLARANSFORTH.

How do you know that I want reformation?

AVA.

Becauſe I know more than you are aware of—more than I wiſh to know—[*paſſionately*]. I have follow'd you from the pharo-table to the tavern: [*mildly*] and ſometimes from the manſions of the rich to the huts of the poor.

CLARANSFORTH.

Has that offended you?

AVA.

No; alternately I approve and condemn you. [*paſſionately*]. You game, you loſe large ſums of money: but, when I look into your heart, I find it free from avarice.

CLARANSFORTH.

Are you a mortal, and pretend to ſee my heart?

AVA.

You drink hard—you are frequently intoxicated: but you do this to oblige your companions.

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

That's true again.

AVA.

You gallant and toy with young women: but 'tis frequently to indulge their depravity more than your own.

CLARANSFORTH.

Extraordinary, by heaven!

AVA.

You profeſs to love a young maiden, whom you hope to rob of her virtue.

[Claransforth *ſtarts.*]

AVA.

And yet, no longer ago than yeſterday, you ſav'd an unfortunate tradeſman from deſtruction by the gift of an hundred guineas.

CLARANSFORTH.

I did it in ſecret.

AVA.

I was near you.

CLARANSFORTH.

The man himſelf did not know me.

AVA.

I knew you.

CLARANSFORTH.

Aſtoniſhing! My clerk ſaid you were a philoſopher. I pronounce you a magician. The art of magic, in the country where you were born, I know is term'd a ſcience. I have heard my father ſpeak of wonders he has known produced there by a certain caſt of Indians. My father was rather ſuperſtitious——

AVA.

And his ſon is rather ſelf-ſufficient.

CLARANSFORTH.

Nay, I mean to ſay, my father was a very good, and, in moſt reſpects, a very wiſe man. But he had more ſingularities than any Engliſh-

man I ever knew. I abſolutely think he believ'd in ghoſts.

AVA.

He had then cauſe—no doubt.

CLARANSFORTH.

"Cauſe"—Ha! ha! ha!—my dear Sir, I ſee the cloſe acquaintance that ſubſiſted between him and you at once; and, probably, it was to your early friendſhip he was indebted for ſome of his opinions on this ſubject—ha! ha! ha!

AVA.

No irreverent jeſts, Sir, on my dead friend's opinions.—Yours, if they ſhou'd improve, will be ſuch as his were.

CLARANSFORTH.

Yes—if I cou'd ſee a ghoſt.

AVA.

Wou'd you believe it was one, if you did?

CLARANSFORTH.

No!

AVA.

Yet you will own, wiſer people than you have believ'd in the return of departed ſpirits.

CLARANSFORTH.

I own it.

AVA.

And on the word of one, whom you may believe has no wiſh to deceive you, I once ſaw the ſpirit, the appearance of a man, whoſe death his friends had long lamented.

CLARANSFORTH.

Deception! Be aſſur'd, deception.—We are more wary in this country; and, my good friend, depend upon it, you wou'd never think you ſaw ſuch a thing in England.

AVA.

It was in England that I ſaw the apparition.

CLARANSFORTH.

Oh! ho! In what part of England?

AVA.

London.—It was in my own lodgings, here in London, that the ſpirit came while I was merely reciting a few words, to ſee if I remember'd the charm my Indian friends reveal'd to me: and I had proofs that I did remember it, with all the ceremony belonging to the ſpell, by the form that appear'd.

CLARANSFORTH.

A jocoſe bottle-companion I hope.

AVA.

Throw off this levity. The figure which appear'd to me—on the word of an old man, and a man of honour, I ſpeak—was that of my late friend, your father.

CLARANSFORTH [*ſtarts—then reſumes his careleſſneſs*].

And, pray, when he came, what did he ſay to you?

AVA.

Very little.

CLARANSFORTH.

Did he aſk for *me?*

AVA.

He mentioned you.

CLARANSFORTH.

And can you remember what he ſaid?

AVA.

Perfectly.

CLARANSFORTH.

A ſecret, perhaps?

AVA.

He did not forbid me to tell it.

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

Then, prythee, tell it me. [*with ſome degree of anxiety.*]

AVA.

He ſaid, that in the laſt hours of your mother's ſickneſs, on her dying bed, ſhe conjured him never to abandon you for any vice that your youthful frailty might commit.

CLARANSFORTH.

Indian, you amaze me; for certainly my mother did leave this injunction, and my father revealed it to me as a ſecret he would tell to no one elſe, leſt it might give the world reaſon to ſuppoſe that my mother fear'd I *deſerved* to be diſinherited.

AVA.

You now then believe all I have uttered?

CLARANSFORTH [*heſitating*].

No—no—ſtill, I can't—I won't believe it.—Would you make a child of me? No!—no—you have only dreamt a dream, that has by chance revealed—though faith 'tis ſingular. But be that as it will, I don't believe a word of the ghoſt—not a word—no—no—not a word.

AVA.

To prove my veracity [*warmly*], will you behold the ſpectre which I ſaw? Say, but yes, and name the hour, I'll raiſe it to your view.

CLARANSFORTH.

Living, though my father ſtript me of my wealth, and ſent me back to plod on a wretched ſpot, where all ſociety is baniſhed, ſtill I ſhould rejoice to ſee him. But dead—I wou'd not that my folly ſhould diſturb, or my curioſity even treat with irreverence, his honoured duſt.

AVA.

You ſpeak with propriety,

CLARANSFORTH [*after a pauſe*].

But do you pretend that he ſaid any thing further?

AVA.

He was beginning another ſubject, when he was interrupted—as we are now.

Enter Bankwell.

BANKWELL.

I beg pardon, if I have left you too long, Ava Thoanoa. I have ſome buſineſs which takes me away inſtantly—ſhall I attend you?

AVA [*bows gravely to* Claransforth].

Good day, Sir.

CLARANSFORTH [*with reſerve and coolneſs*].

Good day, Sir.

[*Exeunt* Bankwell *and* Ava.

Now is he a wiſe man, or a mad man—a knave, or a fool. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A room in* Mr. Metland's *houſe*—Mrs. Metland *alone knitting—A book open on the table before her, in which, at the ſame time, ſhe is reading.*

Mrs. METLAND.

When I was young, poets wrote their ſonnets of love under a thatched roof, and were contented with bread and milk. Twenty years later this ſweet contentment is turned into ridicule: but with me it remains, and I revere it.

Enter Enſign Metland, *with a pocket-book in his hand.*

ENSIGN.

Good morning, dear mother.

Mrs. METLAND.

Welcome, dear Charles! What do you bring me?

ENSIGN.

My whole heart, and the half of my pay. [*Giving her a bank-note.*]

Mrs.

Mrs. METLAND.

Dear boy, how can you content yourſelf with the other half?

ENSIGN.

Were not you contented, mother, when, with your ſmall income, my father purchaſed my commiſſion?

Mrs. METLAND.

We can live ſparingly; but you muſt do honour to your rank as an officer.

ENSIGN.

And if ever my general ſhou'd aſk me why my regimentals look ruſty, my anſwer will not, I think, diſgrace the ſervice.

Mrs. METLAND.

You are young, and ſhould enjoy life.

ENSIGN.

I do:—By putting theſe little monthly ſavings into your hands, I am thus furniſhed each time with four weeks' enjoyment of life.

Mrs. METLAND [*claſps him in her arms*].

Dear Charles!

Enter Ellen.

Ellen here alſo! [*embracing her.*] My dear Ellen, 'tis ſo long ſince I have ſeen you! Children, you give me a cheerful morning.

ELLEN.

Dear brother, we have not ſeen each other this great while!

ENSIGN.

Is that my fault? Why do you forbid my coming to ſee you?

ELLEN.

I only wiſh to keep my mean ſituation a ſecret, to prevent you from being ſneered at in the honorable one you hold. "Enſign Metland

land is brave" I often hear your old colonel ſay, when he viſits my lady. My eyes immediately become moiſt with tears, and the work I am about trembles under my hand—I am reproved for my negligence; but that I do not mind, while I liſten to my brother's praiſe.

ENSIGN.

But Lady Mary Diamond already knows——

ELLEN.

Her ladyſhip has too many concerns of her own, and too much pride, to trouble herſelf about my family. She knows I have a father and mother, and where they live—and that is all: therefore I ſhall purſue my uſual courſe; and in the houſe of lady Mary Diamond I ſhall always drop a curtſy to Enſign Metland; while, in this houſe, he will ever be my dear brother Charles.—And now, my dear mother, here is a ſmall portion [*whiſpers*] of my ſavings. [*Puts into her hand two pieces of gold.*]

Mrs. METLAND.

This is too ſoon again, my child—I fear you deprive yourſelf.

ELLEN.

No, indeed, dear mother.

Mrs. METLAND.

But I entreat you both not to make known to your father the aſſiſtance you give us. His miſtaken pride wou'd rather let him periſh than live on your bounty.—Huſh!—I hear him coming. [*Conceals the money ſhe had received.*]

Enter Mr. Metland, *with a bundle of papers under his arm.—When he comes in at the door, he ſtarts.*

METLAND.

Hey-day! I have juſt left a fine furniſh'd houſe; but my own hut is more finely ornamented.

[*His*

[*His ſon and daughter meet, and* Ellen *kiſſes, him.*]
Welcome! children, welcome! How do you do?

ELLEN.

Very well, dear father.

METLAND.

And you?

ENSIGN.

Tolerable.

METLAND.

Why but tolerable?

ENSIGN.

You know, Sir, that I want——

METLAND.

A good and courageous heart is all that a ſoldier wants; and that I am ſure you poſſeſs.

ENSIGN.

It is my paternal inheritance.

METLAND.

If that is true, you are a rich heir, although my purſe is empty, and theſe walls almoſt bare.

ENSIGN.

But—inconveniences at your time of life.

METLAND.

What do you call inconveniences? Thoſe who can ſupply their wants are well ſupported.

ENSIGN.

Can you do that?

METLAND.

Oh yes, for I am content.—Do you think your mother and I go faſting to bed? No—no—What my induſtry daily produces, her dear hands daily prepares; and our homely fare is made delicious by her conſtant cheerfulneſs and ſerenity. If ever you perceive tears in her eyes, the ſmoke of the kitchen fire is the cauſe of them.

Mrs.

Mrs. METLAND.

Yes, my dear husband, I should be contented; quite satisfied, if only——

METLAND.

No one lives whose contentment is not, at times, crossed by an "if only." Let us hear the tendency of your "if only."

Mrs. METLAND.

If only—Ellen were not obliged to be a servant.

METLAND.

And what is her servitude? Your daughter is a waiting-maid, and obliged to humour the whims and caprices of another woman, which prevents her having leisure to indulge her own.

Mrs. METLAND.

It grieves me to think she is as a stranger in in our house.

METLAND [*pressing* Ellen's *hands*].

She will never be a stranger in our hearts. No! never, never!

Mrs. METLAND.

You have again brought home a large heap of papers, Mr. Metland.

METLAND.

Yes; heaven be thanked! there is work for a whole month; and, "if only"——There, now, I have caught myself at an "if only."

Mrs. METLAND.

Explain it—intrust its meaning to your family.

METLAND.

I was going to say, "if only" my debts were paid—then anxiety would not alone be cast from my heart, but, what would please me much more, from the hearts of my creditors. [*sighing.*]

ENSIGN.

How was it possible, my father, that, with your industry

induſtry and temperance, you ſhould have creditors?

ELLEN.

How can you aſk, brother? Conſider the expenſe of our education.

METLAND.

The expenſe of your education, children, has been defrayed from a capital which is inexhauſtible—Parental care accompliſhed it.—No, my dear, a misfortune that befel me a year ago, has impoveriſhed us ſo much, that, at my advanced life, it will be impoſſible for my labour to retrieve me.

Mrs. METLAND.

We were both poor when we married; but we had, through care, ſaved up a handſome fortune.

METLAND.

Twelve thouſand pounds.

Mrs. METLAND.

Which your father took to the rich merchant Claransforth.

ELLEN.

Claransforth! [*In confuſion.*]

Mrs. METLAND.

The preſent young merchant's father.

METLAND.

He was my friend.

ENSIGN.

And ranged you?

METLAND.

That would have hurt me much more than the loſs of my money.—No; he meant me well, and was to have given me a ſhare in his flouriſhing buſineſs. But it happened, that, on the very even-

ing when I took to him my long-collected ſtore, he was overwhelmed with letters and papers by the ſudden arrival of a foreign mail, and could not at that moment give me a receipt for what I placed in his hands.

Mrs. METLAND.

That very night part of Claransforth's houſe was burnt to the ground, and Claransforth himſelf periſhed.

METLAND.

I loſt a proved friend.

Mrs. METLAND.

And the indefatigable earnings of twenty years.

ELLEN [*in agitation*].

And could his ſon be ſo baſe as to deny the debt?

METLAND.

His ſon was abroad at the time, and a total ſtranger to me. On his arrival, he proves to be a man of pleaſure—a fine gentleman, who neglects all kind of buſineſs. The executors judged of my caſe, and did their duty. I had no vouchers.

ENSIGN.

But Claransforth's books—your word—your oath?

METLAND.

None of his books were loſt by the fire, and the ſum was not entered in any of them. Bankwell, his truſty clerk, was queſtioned on the ſubject: he ſpoke to the fairneſs of my character; but could ſay no more. Every place was ſearched.—I deſcribed the notes, the cords they were tied

tied with. All was in vain—nothing could be found, and I was ruined.

Mrs. METLAND.

Enough, and already too much, of a luckleſs hour. I count my good fortune by years.

ELLEN.

Dear father and mother, I fear I muſt be gone. My lady expects company to breakfaſt, about three this afternoon; and ordered me to return in time to dreſs her.

METLAND.

I don't like ſuch irregular hours for meals. I hope there is nothing elſe irregular in your lady's family. You bluſh.—At what hour do you go to bed?

ELLEN.

Immediately after her ladyſhip.

METLAND.

There's an equivocation in that reply.—I aſked you the time ye went to bed—the exact time.

ELLEN.

Do you mean the reſt of the ſervants, or only me?

METLAND.

Again equivocation?

Mrs. METLAND.

Dear huſband! ſhe comes ſcarcely more than once a month to ſee us; and, then, do not be too hard upon her—She has no meaning in her anſwers.

METLAND.

So it ſeems.

Mrs. METLAND.

I would ſay, no deſign to deceive you; ſhe is a good girl. [*Shaking her hand kindly.*]

METLAND.

I take her to be ſuch, or ſhe would have no buſineſs here, though ſhe is my daughter.

ENSIGN.

No tears, Ellen—you will anger my father ſtill more.

METLAND.

What! does ſhe weep?—Ellen, I love you dearly; and your perſon, as a female, and my child, I am bound to protect. But your *mind* you muſt guard yourſelf. Over that I have no controul, but ſuch as you are pleaſed to beſtow by your confidence; and when you ſo truſt and empower me, I'll be its guardian, or depute my ſon with my authority. Theſe affectionate terms I offer, ſuppoſing you all that's amiable and good.

Mrs. METLAND.

She is; I am ſure ſhe is.

METLAND.

Who ſuſpects ſhe is not? I am only adverting to what it is poſſible ſhe may hereafter be.—And, then, neither to her mind or perſon am I a protector, or is this houſe her home.

Mrs. METLAND [*ſupporting* Ellen, *who flies to her in terror*].

You are a harſh man; a very good, honeſt man; but too auſtere with thoſe of leſs fortitude than yourſelf. [*Exit with* Ellen.

METLAND.

Charles, I have ſpoken ſomething warmer to your ſiſter than I intended. I did not mean to make her weep, eſpecially as ſhe comes ſo ſeldom to ſee us. Follow her, Charles, and your mother, and ſay I was a little haſty. Go—it does not become me to own myſelf to blame. But invite Ellen to ſtay, and take ſome dinner with

with us, and I'll come in by the time you are all ſat down. You know, Charles, I am often harſh with you; and yet I love you.—You know I am ſometimes even ſevere with your mother; yet, heaven is my witneſs! this world would be nothing to me without her mild ſociety.—You know my temper, Charles—you know, too, that irritable temper has met with ſome ſharp trials.

Exeunt.

ACT

ACT. II.

SCENE I. *A room in the houſe of* Timothy Starch.

Enter Rachel Starch *and* Timothy Starch, *followed by* Ruth Starch.

RACHEL.

TIMOTHY, Timothy, I ſay unto thee, that Claransforth, the merchant, is the man whom I have choſen, from amongſt all other of her ſuitors, to be the ſpouſe of thy daughter Ruth.

TIMOTHY.

What will our elders ſay to ſuch a marriage? For neighbour Claransforth is not one of the faithful.

RACHEL.

But he is one of the rich.

TIMOTHY.

It is aſked by pious ſpeakers, "Of what value are riches?"

RACHEL.

And it is anſwered by other pious ſpeakers, "Of a great deal."—How can a man give to the poor, while he is poor himſelf?

TIMOTHY.

Thou art right. What can a man give who poſſeſſeth nothing? What produceth alms but money?—Verily, what doth money not produce? And, that my daughter ſhall be wedded to a rich huſband, maketh me content.

RACHEL.

RACHEL.

It maketh me glad; and it ſhould cauſe thee, maiden, to rejoice with exceeding great joy.

RUTH.

Verily, verily, thou has often inſtructed me, not to rejoice with over much gladneſs for that which paſſeth away.

TIMOTHY.

And it is a precept thou art bound to follow, in imitation of thy father, who has never, ſince he came to man's eſtate, ſuffered himſelf to feel either joy or ſadneſs, grief or merriment; but has paſſed his life in an uniform dullneſs, and inſenſibility to all around.—And I am thankful that it is ſo; for, though I never felt love, I have likewiſe never known hate. Though I am ſteeled to pity, I am alſo proof againſt anger: and I never in my life did any harm, though I never did any good.

RACHEL.

Ruth Starch, when wilt thou boaſt thus? And I ſay unto thee, Ruth, when the merchant, Claransforth, ſhall offer to take thee in marriage, wilt thou reject or accept him?

RUTH.

Peradventure he may never offer.

TIMOTHY.

Then why cometh he here to ſmile and to ſimper; to gaze and to ſigh; to bow to thy mother, and ſhake hands with me?

RUTH.

Doth it follow, that a young man muſt marry in every houſe where he gazeth and ſhaketh hands?

RACHEL.

Ruth, Ruth, thou art not inclined to wed Claransforth; neither any of the friends that frequent

frequent our meeting-houſe.—To what am I to aſcribe this coldneſs?

RUTH.

Verily, to the cold of which my father is compoſed; for I liken him unto a *ſnow-ball*, and myſelf unto a *ſnow-drop*.

RACHEL.

But it is ordained that thou ſhould'ſt marry.

RUTH.

It is alſo ordained that I firſt be wooed.

RACHEL.

And canſt thou ſay that Claranſforth has not wooed thee?

RUTH.

I can affirm that he hath never aſked me to become his wife.

RACHEL.

He will aſk thee.

RUTH.

Then I will anſwer.

RACHEL.

How—in what manner?

RUTH.

As the ſpirit moveth.

Enter a Quaker Servant.

SERVANT.

A man bedecked in ſcarlet, he whom thou haſt long ago deſired me to watch, ſlily put this letter into my hand, and required of me to give it as ſlily to Ruth, whom he called my young miſtreſs.

TIMOTHY.

Give the letter to me. [Servant *gives him the letter.*]

RACHEL [*to the* Servant].

And go thou back to the man in ſcarlet, and

and ſay unto him, Follow me to Ruth, who wiſheth to commune with thee. [*Exit* Servant.

RUTH.

I want not to commune with any man.

RACHEL.

But I and thy father do.

TIMOTHY [*after reading the letter*].

Yea;—it behoveth us to rebuke this man, who is, I perceive, by his ſubſcription, he whom we ſuſpected — the ſon of the ruined Metland; and when he cannot behold Ruth by beſetting the houſe, writes unto her fooliſh epiſtles, called love-letters.

[*Enter* Servant, *ſhowing in* Enſign Metland, *who ſtarts.*]

Thou art ſurpriſed to be brought before the parents, when thou didſt only expect to ſee the maiden, whom thou affronteſt by thy wanton love.

ENSIGN.

I am, I own, amazed at the deceit by which I was allured hither;—but I deny the epithet which you have given to my paſſion;—for it is ſincere, it is pure, it is honorable.

TIMOTHY.

And, in anſwer to all thy pretenſions—I ſay unto thee, young man, thou weareſt a red coat.

ENSIGN.

I ſcorn illiberal reproaches, or elſe I would ſay in return——

TIMOTHY.

What!—what would'ſt thou ſay?

ENSIGN.

That you—wear a brown one.

TIMOTHY.

Is there any repoach in that?

ENSIGN.

Surely not.—Who but reverences the modes of your ſect, the ſober decency of your habit and manners; the ſteady ſobriety of your men, the modeſt demeanour of your women; that timed retiring diſpoſition, that ſimple cloathing, tending to form the humble handmaid, the obedient wife, the meritorious mother.

TIMOTHY.

What importeth thy elocution? It is not only I, and my ſpouſe, who diſlike thee; but that damſel hath natural fear and terror of a ſoldier.—Haſt thou not, Ruth?

RUTH.

Yea, verily, I have fear and terror of an army of ſoldiers; but of one, all alone by himſelf, I am not much afraid.

RACHEL.

Thou ſpeakeſt unwarily:—one ſoldier alone, in a young maiden's apartment, is more dangerous than ten thouſand in the field.

RUTH.

Thou filleſt me with aſtoniſhment!—To be in the midſt of a ſwarm of bees is perilous; but if one bee hums and buzzes about me, I think, with a little watching, I could ſuffer it to ſip honey even from the noſegay in my boſom.

TIMOTHY.

Daughter, do not compare a ſoldier to a harmleſs bee;—he is a lion.

RUTH.

The terror of the lion is in his fangs and his paws; that of a ſoldier in his firelock and bayonet; but when he lays aſide his arms, peradventure, he is as gentle as any other of his fellow creatures.

TIMOTHY.

Ruth! Ruth!—thy ſayings are unwiſe.

RACHEL.

And I command thee to depart from among us.

RUTH.

I will ſhow obedience to my mother,—even ſuch obedience as I would ſhow to the huſband of my choice. [*Exit.*

TIMOTHY.

Come, Rachel, we will alſo retire.—And now, friend, being left alone, I truſt thou wilt likewiſe depart. [*Exeunt ſeverally*

SCENE II. *A room at* Lady Mary Diamond's.

Enter Claransforth, *met by a* Servant.

SERVANT.

Lady Mary will wait on you immediately. [*Exit.*

CLARANSFORTH.

I leave this houſe of a night, vowing never to return to it again; and, in the morning, the firſt viſit I pay is here. It is in vain to reſiſt—I cannot keep away; but, not like other gameſters, I come.—The cards and dice, which I ſeem to love, and are placed in my reach, are my abhorrence; while the woman, whom I muſt not ſeem to love, and is out of my reach——

Enter Ellen.

ELLEN.

Her ladyſhip is buſy at preſent, Sir, and deſired me to ſay——

CLARANSFORTH.

How fortunate! One would ſuppoſe ſhe knew the bleſſing ſhe beſtowed on me, in deputing you, inſtead of coming herſelf.

ELLEN.

She desired me to say, Sir, that if you cannot now wait till she comes, she begs you will not disappoint her of your company in the evening.

CLARANSFORTH.

In the evening I shall not perhaps see you; but I owe her my company *then* for the pleasure she has given me *now*. Therefore, assure her I will be here. [Ellen *is going*.] Stay, stay, a moment!—or, by heaven! I'll not come.—Do you not know that you are my sole attraction to this house; that, but for you, I should never enter it?

ELLEN.

Then you have me to blame for all your ill luck at cards.

CLARANSFORTH.

And for all my good fortune in society; for it is the impression on my mind, of your sweetness, which makes other things pleasing to me; of your worth, that makes other things worthy.—You smile with incredulity; but, remember, I am a merchant, and value truth and fair dealing beyond my life.

ELLEN.

You mean to say, your conscience is your book-keeper.

CLARANSFORTH.

I mean, that my heart I consider as the most valuable among all my goods.

ELLEN.

Would you make merchandise of your heart?

CLARANSFORTH.

No; but I would give it away.

ELLEN.

Men and children give things away; but soon take them back again.

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

Put me to the trial.

ELLEN.

Sir, your converſation degrades you.—You forget what I am.

CLARANSFORTH.

You are not what you ought to be.

ELLEN.

Do not perſuade me to think ſo.—I would fit my ſentiments to my ſituation.

CLARANSFORTH.

Rather alter that which fate has thrown you in.—You ſerve, and might command.

ELLEN.

I am content, while I enjoy command over myſelf.

CLARANSFORTH.

Why not be the miſtreſs of me, and of all that is mine? Why not confer happineſs, while you would ſecure your own? Why theſe doubts and ſuſpicions of a man who loves you?

ELLEN.

Why this ridicule of one who has never offended you?

CLARANSFORTH.

Ridicule!—If you could ſee my heart, Ellen, you have too much juſtice to inſult my paſſion.—Indeed, I love you!—I adore you!

ELLEN.

Oh, Mr. Claranſforth! [*in great agitation.*]

CLARANSFORTH.

For heaven's ſake! you alarm me.—What's the matter?

ELLEN.

I am not eighteen—you are almoſt twice my age, and nature has given you an underſtanding which

which education and intercourſe with the world has rendered far ſuperior to mine. Can it be wondered that your attentions have flattered my vanity; that your profeſſions captivate my heart? Your addreſſes have the ſame weight with me that ſimilar addreſſes have with ſimilar young women; and I tremble leſt the event ſhould be the ſame. If I fly from you, you will purſue me; if I vow never to ſubmit, you will determine to conquer: but here, without another ſtruggle for victory, I claim your protection.—Weapons of reſiſtance I have none; yet do not take advantage of my weakneſs.—Yielding, I beg for mercy—Let me live with honour! [*Kneeling.*]

CLARANSFORTH [*aſide*].

She has fixed on the only method;—ſhe agitates me beyond bearing. [*To her*] You know not how you diſtreſs me. I cannot in this houſe explain all I wiſh, to prove my love to be real, my friendſhip laſting:—leave this place, throw yourſelf ſolely on my protection.—The name of wife is but a vain appendage to the union of hearts; and under my roof——

ELLEN.

You make me ſhudder—Can ſuch an offer be the reſult of my candid declaration? But I thank you, Sir—You have no mercy, no pity for me,—and you change my love to hate. [*Exit.*

CLARANSFORTH.

Would mine could be ſo changed! But that, I fear, is fixed. Hark! ſhe is returning. Provoking! her lady is with her.—Now, there I could hate moſt cordially, without one effort.

[*Exit on the oppoſite ſide.*

Re-enter Ellen, *followed by* Lady Mary Diamond.

LADY MARY.

Do you ſuppoſe I took you into my houſe for the

the employment I pretended? to take care of my dreſſes, and fix them becomingly about my perſon? Do you imagine, that with thoſe ſoft engaging manners, formed to ſeduce the other ſex, I would have had near me a rival ſuch as you, but for ſome more important uſe?

ELLEN.

Dreadful! [*aſide*].—What uſe?

LADY MARY.

That which you have already been to me.—Why do you think I ſuffered you to ride by my ſide through London ſtreets, but that you might be followed by unthinking fools, who enrich our pharo-bank?—You are the allurement of half thoſe madmen who loſe to me their fortune; but of all thoſe, Claransforth is by far the richeſt and the leaſt ſuſpicious of our aim:—him, then, you muſt manage artfully; and beware how you quarrel with him.

ELLEN.

But, if he quarrels with me——?

LADY MARY.

Then make it up—kiſs, and friends. Why do you ſtart? Tears!—then I ſuſpect—Idiot! Fool! Now, you have no further power, and we have loſt him as a viſitor. Is this your prudery? I thought, notwithſtanding your poverty, you were of a virtuous, honorable family.

ELLEN.

And ſo I am.

LADY MARY.

I thought that you, yourſelf, were nicely delicate.

ELLEN.

And ſo I am.

LADY

LADY MARY.

O! I give you joy; for then your power may not be over;—but if ſo, of what have you to complain?

ELLEN.

That his behaviour firſt gained my affection, and now excites my hatred.

LADY MARY.

Are you ſure you hate him?

ELLEN.

His very name gives me torture.

LADY MARY.

I underſtand—he planned your ruin.—In return, I will inſtruct you how to accompliſh his.

ELLEN [*ſtarts*].

Not for the world!

LADY MARY.

You love him, it ſeems, then, ſtill. So much the better. I'll point out the way you ſhall become his wife. Our party entertain the hope that, in an honorable way at the game of pharo, we may, perhaps, ſoon make him poor as you are. On this very evening's play ſome conſiderable bets are laid, that he'll not be a rich man to-morrow morning. A ſelect company ſup here this evening.—You muſt be preſent; and take care that Claranſforth be of the party. In the mean time, guard ſafely theſe inſtruments of wealth and articles of tranſfer between us gaming jobbers. [*Gives dice and a paper to* Ellen.] Only, my dear Ellen, draw Claranſforth here to night; and by to-morrow, reduced to poverty, he will offer you his hand in marriage.

ELLEN.

That would be triumph indeed!

LADY-

LADY MARY.

I knew you would think it ſo.—And there will be yet, perhaps, ſome wreck of his fortune left, that may allow you both a comfortable ſupport. And you, I know, with a hundred a year, and half a dozen children, will be completely happy.

ELLEN.

I could be happy on a leſs income.

LADY MARY.

But you muſt write to Claransforth immediately; and, ſeeming to make all up with him, perſuade him to keep his appointment, elſe he'll not be here. Come, be cheerful—he ſhall be your huſband ſtill; and, with him and virtue, you'll be as rich as an empreſs.—Go, write to him.

ELLEN.

No, madam; as I have preſerved myſelf from his deſigns, I have no malice towards him, and will not be an accomplice in his ruin.

LADY MARY.

I thought you wiſhed him every ill.

ELLEN.

I thought ſo too.

LADY MARY.

Ay, you relent.—But have a care; do as I have ordered you; and ſee he comes to meet the company that expects him; or, when all hopes of his joining us are over, I will ſend you home to your parents, as unworthy of ſtaying a moment longer in my family—as one devoted to Claransforth: and the very degradation which you dread ſhall be the ſtigma with which I will return you to your parents. [*Exit.*

ELLEN. [*Alone.*]

I do not think of myſelf.—Ruin! beggary! poverty! perhaps diſtraction!—To ſee Claransforth

forth reduced to theſe—The very apprehenſion has awakened all the tenderneſs I thought for ever gone.—No! it would be my duty to ſave any of my fellow creatures from ſuch calamity:—and to ſave him, I find, will be my delight.—But how? He would not believe, were I merely to ſend him a letter on the ſubject, ſtating my ſuſpicions. He would conſider it as ſome new artifice, my love had contrived, to draw him back to me.—Unprincipled as he is himſelf, he is wholly unſuſpecting of the wicked gameſters who viſit this houſe. How, then, can I convince him without proof? And proof is, perhaps, here—[*examines what* Lady Mary *has put in her hand.*]—Dice! loaded, falſe dice, perhaps—and a paper ſigned by Sir Richard Chances, Lady Mary, and others.—A wicked plot for Claransforth's deſtruction.—I will take all theſe—Yes, I will take them all; and with my own hands ſafely place them in his—then, bid him farewell for ever. [*Exit.*

ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Berkeley Square.*

Enter Claransforth, *reading a letter.*

CLARANSFORTH.

IT is her hand, or elſe I could not have believed ſhe would have acted ſo inconſiſtently.—Ah! Woman! Woman!—Not three hours ago ſhe drove me from her ſight for ever, and now appoints a meeting in this ſquare, almoſt at twilight.—If I ſhould have miſs'd her:—for whether ſhe meant to be on this, or that ſide, ſhe was in too much haſte to tell me.

Enter Ava, *who paſſeth* Claransforth.

CLARANSFORTH [*turns and calls after him*].

Ah! my Indian friend! How do you do?—I am glad to meet you once again. You didn't ſee a young woman paſs any-where here lately—did you?

AVA.

A young woman!

CLARANSFORTH.

Ay, a young woman.

AVA.

What ſort of a woman?

CLARANSFORTH.

Why, zounds, if you muſt know—a pretty girl.

AVA.

—I take no notice of pretty girls;—eſpecially in the ſtreets of London.

CLARANSFORTH.

No—you would prefer them at your lodgings:—and 'tis better—more prudent for a man of your age.

AVA.

No, Sir, I don't mean——

CLARANSFORTH.

Don't be in a paſſion.—I ſhall take mine to lodgings, as ſoon as I can find her.—But you muſt get out of the way when ſhe comes, for ſhe is ſo timid—ſo baſhful, and ſo innocent!

AVA.

Innocent! Then do not *you* be guilty.

CLARANSFORTH.

Pſha!—an appointment like this.—But tell me, my honeſt friend;—you, who can penetrate her thoughts, my thoughts, and every body's thoughts! who can converſe with ſpirits, and learn all their ſecrets!—tell me, when my miſtreſs arrives, will ſhe be kind, or cruel?

AVA.

Both!

CLARANSFORTH.

Equivocation!—But oracles never ſpeak in direct terms.—However, my dear friend, as you once made the offer to ſhow me my dead father, I'll change the mode of the obligation, and, inſtead of him, bring me, immediately, the girl I am waiting for.

Enter Ellen.—AVA *bows, as if he had done what he was deſired, and immediately walks away.*

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH [*calling after him*].

Lucky raſcal! Thank you a thouſand times.—My dear Ellen!—I have been ſo anxious——

ELLEN.

—And ſo have I—and ſo frightened!—I have been prevented coming till now—and now 'tis almoſt dark, and I tremble ſo!

CLARANSFORTH.

My deareſt Ellen!—my charming love!

ELLEN.

No flattery; but hold your hand; and let me be ſure you have them ſafe.

CLARANSFORTH.

What?

ELLEN.

Oh! I fear'd to truſt any other perſon; leſt by ſome accident you ſhou'dn't receive them; or not attend to the warning given by other means than my word.

CLARANSFORTH.

Dice! [*looking at what ſhe gave him.*]

ELLEN.

Falſe dice made for your ruin, which was to be accompliſh'd this very evening.—Read this paper—Inſtructions to the party, ſign'd by Sir Richard.—You'll find I have no malice to you, Mr. Claransforth; although I have formed my reſolution, that we now, on this ſpot, end our acquaintance for ever.

CLARANSFORTH [*reading the paper*].

"Credulous dupe, Claransforth. When I "throw ſixes, be ſure to bet—Our different "ſhares not leſs than fifteen thouſand pounds, "beſides Lady Mary's demand.

"Richard Chances."

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

—Sir Richard too! my pretended friend!—And would nothing but my whole fortune content them?—My eſcape is miraculous—Dear lovely being—My guardian angel!

ELLEN.

But my lady threaten'd, ſhould I not be acceſſary to this combination againſt you, ſhe would ſend me home to my father's in diſgrace.

CLARANSFORTH.

Contemn her threats.—This paper, theſe inſtruments of fraud, and my word, ſhall vindicate your fame.—But you faint—ſuffer me to convey you—

ELLEN [*in a tremulous voice*].

To my father's inſtantly; and let my lady's bad word follow me, if it muſt be ſo. I will plead my own cauſe to my dear parents—tell them I have only done my duty to you; then promiſe them faithfully never to ſee you more.

CLARANSFORTH.

Never ſee me more! Oh, Ellen! impoſſible—You do not mean it. Where is your father's houſe? I'll take you to him myſelf, and tell him all your wond'rous worth.

ELLEN.

Oh! not for the world.—I would not, for the world, you ſhould accompany me. My father is a moſt ſevere man, nicely ſuſpicious.—Only put me in a coach, and direct me home.

CLARANSFORTH.

Suffer me, at leaſt, to go with you part of the way.—Where do your parents live? Now, I hope, you will no longer refuſe to let me know your father's name?

ELLEN.

My reaſons for concealment are at this time more ſtrong than ever. I cannot—will not diſcloſe

close my name.—Only desire the coachman to drive towards the City-road.

CLARANSFORTH.

Her father a severe man, nicely suspicious! If I resign her now, she is lost to me for ever.—I cannot—'tis impossible [*aside*]. I see a coach—It's coming this way—I'll secure it, and be with you instantly. [*Exit.*

ELLEN.

Oh! grant my mother may be at home, and not my father, when I first go in.—To her I can better account, than to him, for my unexpected return, the necessity of quitting my service, and all I have done.

Claransforth *returns with a* Hackney-Coachman.

CLARANSFORTH [*aside to the* Coachman].

I shall tell you "the City-road;" but drive to the corner house—[*Whispers and gives him money.*] [*Exit* Coachman.

ELLEN [*going to* Claransforth].

You are very good. I thank you for your trouble. Oh! that my parents may receive me kindly.

CLARANSFORTH.

Lean on me—don't tremble so——. [*Aside, as he leads her off*] Oh, passion! passion! what a fiend art thou!—While I practice cruelty, my heart is torn with pity. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A room in* Mr. Metland's *house.*

Enter Metland, *and sits.—A knocking at the door.*

METLAND.

Come in.

Enter a Lawyer's Clerk.

CLERK.

A letter, Sir.

METLAND.

From Mr. Lawley, the attorney?

CLERK.

CLERK.

Yes, Sir! [*Exit.*

METLAND.

Why this dread of breaking the ſeal?—I am prepared for the worſt.—[*Opens the letter.*]—"I "am ſorry to inform you, that all your intreaties "have proved fruitleſs. This moment I have "received orders from your creditors to ſeize "your goods:—I haſten to give you notice, that "you may not feel the blow wholly unprepared, "and that you may take advantage of the night "to let your furniture be removed, in order to "avoid all impertinent obſervations in the "neighbourhood."——I thank you, friend.—— "In half an hour's time I ſhall be with you."—— [*After a pauſe*] Well, then, come and take all! —My wife, my children, and my heart, you cannot take from me! [*Throws himſelf into an arm-chair, and covers his face with his hands.*]

Enter Mrs. Metland.

Mrs. METLAND.

What is the matter, dear huſband? [Metland *turns himſelf towards her, and holds out his hand.*] Good heaven! what thus affects you?

METLAND.

I was conſidering what you would do, ſhould I fall ſick.

Mrs. METLAND.

How came this into your mind?—I hope you are not ill?

METLAND.

No; but I am growing old; and that thought makes me melancholy.—How would you be able to maintain an infirm man? What would you do?

Mrs. METLAND.

I would ſell all, except your bed, and one chair—on which I would ſit by your bed-ſide.

METLAND.

METLAND.

And ſleep yourſelf on ſtraw?

Mrs. METLAND.

Why not? It is a bed on which thouſands repoſe.

METLAND.

And were I to get well again?

Mrs. METLAND.

We would reſume our uſual work: and, when we had earned ſufficient to buy the firſt pillow—oh! how ſoftly ſhould we reſt!

METLAND.

—My faithful, my good wife! we have now, at this moment, nothing left.—This very night we ſleep on ſtraw.—In a few minutes theſe few goods will be ſeized by my creditors.

Mrs. METLAND [*alarmed*].

This evening!

METLAND.

I expect their attorney every moment. The evening is an advantage that his humanity grants to the delicacy of our ſituation.

Mrs. METLAND [*In great agitation, but recovers herſelf by force*].

Well, well; I now thank you for the ſad introduction to this diſcloſure. [*Drys her tears.*] It would have been much worſe, had I been obliged to tell all, to nurſe a dearly beloved huſband.

METLAND.

Thus, I expected to find you, and thus I do find you. Yes, Eleanor, we are the perſons beſt able to bear misfortunes; for we have done what we could to avert them.—We have been diligent and frugal, and we now dare fold our hands, and pray with confidence, that heaven will aſſiſt us.

Mrs. METLAND.

Suppoſe you go to your ſon Charles for a few months, and I to my dear Ellen.

METLAND.

Would you part from me? rob me of my only comfort?—When Providence caſt poverty into one ſcale of my life, ſhe threw into the other the bliſs of matrimony, and the laſt ſcale ſunk.—We, therefore, will live together "till death do us part." [*Embracing her.*]

Enter Lawley.

LAWLEY [*ſpeaking to ſome one without*].

Wait in the outer-room till I call you. [*Goes to* Mr. *and* Mrs. Metland.] Believe me, dear Mr. Metland, that, during the thirteen years I have been in my profeſſion, I never practiſed it ſo unwillingly as to-day.

METLAND.

To ſhow compaſſion is a benefaction. Do your duty—We are prepared.

LAWLEY.

I am glad to find you ſo. I admire your fortitude; and could almoſt call you happier than the rigorous men in whoſe names I now appear.

Mrs. METLAND.

Here are the keys to all which our houſe contains.

LAWLEY [*to* Mrs. Metland].

You will have the goodneſs to point out to me what is *your* particular property.

Mrs. METLAND.

Nothing, Sir.

LAWLEY.

In preſents—plate, linen, and ſo forth.

Mrs. METLAND.

I was but a poor girl when my huſband married

ried me, and brought him nothing except my heart.

LAWLEY.

Conſider, you are both now verging into years; and if deprived of every convenience—

METLAND.

Under what pretence ſhould we keep any thing back as preſents from men who have already loſt too much by us; or as gain, from a known fraud?

LAWLEY [*moved*].

I perceive that you are richer than the world ſuppoſes. Well, then, let us make a beginning.—Is this writing-deſk open? [Metland *opens it.*] Won't you take out your papers?

METLAND [*while he takes out the papers*].

You muſt know, that, of all I poſſeſs, the loſs of this writing-deſk grieves me moſt.

LAWLEY.

One gets accuſtomed to a favourite piece of furniture.

METLAND.

It is not that. This writing-deſk once belonged to my old friend, the late Claransforth. He ſat before it when I ſaw him for the laſt time. After his death, I wiſh'd to keep ſomething for his ſake; and this deſk was given to me by his executors, at the requeſt of his old clerk, Bankwell.

LAWLEY.

It was but little to give, conſidering the great loſs which, as it is ſaid, you had juſt ſuſtained.

METLAND.

It is now empty—Here is the key.

LAWLEY.

Have you taken out every thing?

METLAND.

Yes, every thing.

LAWLEY.

Why, here is a ſpring and a ſecret drawer.

METLAND.

Not that I know of.

LAWLEY [*touching a ſpring, which throws forth a drawer*].

A drawer, and full of papers.

METLAND [*ſurpriſed*].

They don't belong to me.

LAWLEY.

A whole parcel of bank-notes.

METLAND [*looks at them*].

Gracious Power! that is my money.

LAWLEY.

Is it poſſible?

METLAND.

Thoſe are my twelve thouſand pounds, tied juſt as I left them.

Mrs. METLAND.

God! thou art near us in the hour of trial.

METLAND.

Mr. Lawley, [*examining the notes*] this is the ſame money which I carried to old Claransforth the evening before he died.

LAWLEY.

I underſtand.—Now all is cleared up: the old man put by his friend's money ſafe enough.

Mrs. METLAND.

He was juſt then buſily employed, and, certainly, put it haſtily out of his hand into this drawer.

LAWLEY.

It is clear, it is clear! And I am fortunate that

that heaven has chosen me for the instrument of this recovery.—Mr. Metland, I wish you joy, with all my heart, [*shakes him by the hand*] and return home a far happier man than I came.

[*Going.*

METLAND.

Stop, Mr. Lawley. Dare I make use of this money?

LAWLEY.

Why not? It is your own.—Is it not found, exact, as you have always described it?

METLAND.

But have I not just said, that the papers which this writing-desk now contains do not belong to me?

LAWLEY.

They do belong to you.

METLAND.

When the executors of my old friend made me this a present, did they know of its contents? And dare I call that my own, which, by chance, remained in the desk of a deceased person, whose inheritor I am not? Dare I keep silent on this occurrence? May not some other thing be in the drawer, besides these bank-notes?

LAWLEY [*casts a look*].

Very true.—And there lays a letter sure enough, which, on our first joy, escaped our notice.

METLAND.

A letter!—To whom?

LAWLEY [*reads the direction*].

"To my son, Edward Claransforth. Not to "be opened till after my death."

METLAND.

METLAND.

Now—what now!—Muſt I embezzle that letter too?

LAWLEY.

What has this letter to do with your money?

METLAND.

I ſhall carry both to young Claransforth.

LAWLEY.

Take my advice—Young Claransforth is unthinking and diſſipated. Who knows but that he is capable of accepting the money, and, in a very eaſy manner, returning you thanks?

METLAND.

In fulfilling the duty of an honeſt man, I do not, therefore, renounce my right. Yet, to inveſt myſelf with this property, without an explanation, I will not.

LAWLEY.

I ſee you are determined, and I ſhall ſay no more—Do as you pleaſe: and, if Claransforth is not diſhoneſt, you may now pay all your debts, and live in comfort the reſt of your life.—So I ſhall tell thoſe who ſent me, and my buſineſs here will be over; for which I ſhall be heartily glad. With a heavy heart I came into this houſe; with a light one I leave it. [*Exit.*

METLAND.

You do not ſay a ſingle word to all this.

Mrs. METLAND.

I will not deny, that to me your virtue appears rather too ſtrict.—Is the money not unqueſtionably yours?

METLAND.

This is enough for my conſcience, but not for example ſake.—In a word, my dear Eleanor, I feel that I could not enjoy it without the full conſent of young Claransforth. Early to-mor-

row

row morning I will haſten to him, and put an end to our ſuſpenſe and argument at once. [*A loud rap at the door.*]—A loud rap at this houſe! —Can it be my ſon!

Mrs. METLAND.

No; for he took leave of me, going out of town on duty till to-morrow noon.

LADY MARY [*without*].

If Mr. and Mrs. Metland live here, I muſt ſee them immediately. [*Enter* Lady Mary]. My dear, good, worthy people, how do you both do? I beg pardon for diſturbing you at this late hour; but I could not go to reſt without ſeeing, and ſpeaking to your daughter Ellen.

Mrs. METLAND.

Is ſhe not at your ladyſhip's?

METLAND.

She is not at home, madam.

LADY MARY [*affecting ſurpriſe*].

Not at home!—Are you ſure of it? Both ſure of it?

METLAND.

Yes; both.

LADY MARY.

Why, then, I have only to ſay, Heaven bleſs you, good people!—and good night.

Mrs. METLAND.

Dear madam, ſtay and relieve my mind.

METLAND [*going up to her*].

Tell me the worſt.

LADY MARY.

The taſk is too difficult.—Excuſe me—No, I cannot.

METLAND.

Look at my poor wife.—Kill her at once, or relieve her.

LADY

LADY MARY.

Why, then, your daughter not being at home, where I did hope, (though I muſt own I feared I ſhould not find her), confirms me that ſhe is—

Mrs. METLAND.

Not dead?

METLAND.

Not worſe than dead?

LADY MARY.

Why, that is as you may conſider it. Life to moſt people is precious—And yet, life, with loſs of honour—[*They ſtart.*]—But don't ſuppoſe I come to acquaint you with any thing of this kind for *certain*. All I know is, that your daughter, in tears, confeſſed to me, this morning, her love for a gentleman who occaſionally viſits at my houſe; and who had plainly declared to her, as ſhe informed me, that his intentions towards her were not ſuch as her friends would approve.—Yet, knowing this—and after all the good advice I gave her—ſhe was ſeen this very evening, ſince dark, with that ſelf-ſame man, in a hackney-coach; and not returning to me by the hour my doors are always locked, I thought it my duty to come and ſtate all this to you, her parents, that no reproach may reſt on my character.

METLAND.

Tell me the villain's name with whom ſhe is fled!

LADY MARY.

There I muſt beg to be excuſed. He is a gay man: but all men are gay now-a-days.—And your daughter is a young woman: but all women are young now-a-days.

METLAND.

But, Madam—the name of the libertine?

LADY MARY.

I truſt, Mr. Metland, as a man of honour, you will not compel me to divulge that part of my ſtory. Conſider, you have a ſon in the army; and were I ſo indiſcreet as to reveal names, a duel might enſue, and you, by to-morrow, be childleſs.

Mrs. METLAND.

I thank you for your foreſight.

METLAND.

And I ſubmit.—She is not worth the hazard of a brother's life. Even I would not expoſe myſelf for her, ſuch as ſhe *is!*—though, to have preſerved her what ſhe *was*, I would have died with joy!

LADY MARY.

I am ſincerely glad to find you both ſo rational; and, as it very late, and a very dreadful night, and I have great compaſſion for my horſes—(one ſhould be kind to dumb creatures), I'll take my leave.—Adieu! I hope you think I have done my duty.—Good night! [*Exit.*

METLAND.

"Good night!"—Can we have a good night?

Mrs. METLAND.

No! The repoſe we promiſed to ourſelves, from the contents of that deſk, is gone for ever.

METLAND [*laying hold of her hand*].

Our daughter is gone for ever—and all the gold and gems contained in the whole world, would not repay us for her loſs. [*Exeunt.*

ACT. IV.

SCENE I. *The lodgings of* Ava Thoanoa.

Enter Ava, *followed by a* Servant.

AVA.

WHO do you ſay has called, ſince I have been out?

SERVANT.

Only this gentleman. [*Gives a card.*]

AVA.

Claransforth!—What could bring him here?

SERVANT.

The gentleman ſeemed very ſorry you were not at home; and ſaid, He would call again.—Here he is, Sir. [*Exit.*

Enter CLARANSFORTH.

AVA.

Good morning, Mr. Claransforth!

CLARANSFORTH.

Good morning, Ava!—I hope you are very well? [*Throws himſelf in a chair.*]

AVA.

You do not ſeem as if *you* were.

CLARANSFORTH.

Why, yes, pretty well—I can't ſay I am very well.

AVA.

The honour of a viſit from you is totally unexpected.—How came you to know where I live?

live? I don't remember your having aſked me for my addreſs.

CLARANSFORTH.

Bankwell, my clerk; he who introduced you —I aſked him for it. [*Sighs heavily.*]

AVA.

But, from the company I left you in laſt night, I could ſcarcely have expected to ſee you abroad thus early.

CLARANSFORTH.

Ha! What you mean the pretty girl.—True: after you were gone, we went to a houſe together.

AVA.

I know you did.

CLARANSFORTH.

And to a houſe of ill-fame.

AVA.

I know it.

CLARANSFORTH.

Ay, to be ſure, you know every thing!—And 'tis this very knowledge which you boaſt of that has brought me to you this morning, to aſk your aſſiſtance.

AVA.

I will ſerve you in any thing that is honorable.

CLARANSFORTH.

'Sdeath, Sir! do you think I would require of you any thing elſe?

AVA.

You are out of humour—diſpleaſed, uneaſy. —What's the matter?

CLARANSFORTH.

Why do you aſk? Don't you know without my telling you?

AVA.

Perhaps I do.—But there are ſome things I muſt be told, before I hazard giving an affront by mentioning them.

CLARANSFORTH.

Why, this is, to be ſure, an affair of ſome delicacy; and pardon me, if, in what I am going to ſay, I am guilty of a breach of delicacy towards you.—I ſuſpect you are mending a broken fortune, by being the ſpy of ſome great man, or ſome foreign power: but, be this as it will, you certainly do poſſeſs yourſelf of moſt excellent intelligence concerning others,—as I am a proof. Now, whether this knowledge comes by natural or ſupernatural means, that I will not diſpute with you,—it ſhall be as you chooſe: only have the friendſhip to take ſome little trouble, either through your human or your infernal agents, to find for me ſomething I have loſt.

AVA.

And what is the thing which you are ſo earneſt to recover?

CLARANSFORTH.

It is a perſon.

AVA.

A perſon!—And who is he?

CLARANSFORTH.

It is not *he*; it is *ſhe*.

AVA.

And who is ſhe? [*roughly.*]

CLARANSFORTH.

Whenever an old man talks of *ſhe*, how croſs he ſpeaks!—In ſhort, it is the girl you ſaw with me laſt night.

AVA [*with contempt*].

And would you employ my art to recover her?

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

Sooner than any thing in the world.

AVA.

A pretty girl is eaſy to be found, without the art of conjuration.

CLARANSFORTH.

But what is another man's taſte may not be be mine; and her you ſaw with me laſt night I would give twenty thouſand pounds you could ſee with me again to night.

AVA.

Without applying to me, a ſlender part of that ſum, I ſhould conceive, would fulfil your wiſhes.

CLARANSFORTH.

No!—ſhe is virtuous, and not to be purchaſed.

AVA.

And do you pretend that the girl who accompanied you to ſuch a houſe as you have mentioned——

CLARANSFORTH.

In that ſhe was deceived. She thought I was going to take her to her parent's houſe.—And, oh! what aggravates my grief, my remorſe, her father was *my* father's friend—a man of the ſtricteſt honour, who loſt his fortune in our houſe —His name is Metland.—This I only learnt an hour ago from the ſervants of Lady Mary Diamond.—The daughter, from motives of prudence, had concealed from me the name of her family.

AVA.

And inſtead of taking her to this honored parent's houſe, you took her to one devoted to purpoſes vile as your own.

CLARANSFORTH.

From whence, inſulted by my paſſion, ſhe found

found means to eſcape, while I left her for a few moments to the care of one of the family.

AVA.

And do you wiſh to purſue her to her preſent aſylum?

CLARANSFORTH.

What aſylum?—I have ſent ſpies to her father's, and have been myſelf at the lady's with whom ſhe lived. She has returned to neither place—and where, in the midſt of a cold ſtormy night, ſhe could ſhelter——

AVA.

No matter where, ſince ſhe was ſheltered from you.

CLARANSFORTH.

The moment I found ſhe had eſcaped me, I put piſtols in my pocket, and, like a madman, ran half the town over, reſolute to regain her.—My emiſſaries have been through the other half.—In vain all our efforts to find her.—And now, deſpairing, I am come to you—You, who can ſearch the grave, and bring forth the dead, cannot you diſcover the abode of the living?

AVA.

No! for my art is harmleſs.—The dead are beyond your power to injure;—the living you would deſtroy.

CLARANSFORTH.

I waſte my time in talking to you.

AVA.

Still 'tis but waſted.—Your time would, probably, be worſe ſpent in occupation.

CLARANSFORTH.

Ava Thoanoa, in what have I offended you, that you perſiſt in your malignity towards me?—As my father's friend, I received you kindly, bore all your reproaches with patience, and from my heart

heart forgave you;—nay, for that venerable face and ſolemn accent, I half believed the falſities you uttered.

AVA.

Falſities!

CLARANSFORTH.

Submit to the reproach, or raiſe me ſpectres.—This is the very time.—My feelings are ſo painful, I want them expelled by others ſtill more acute.—And if you have any arts to play, any tricks to ſhow, begin inſtantly. I'm in a humour to fear nothing.

AVA.

This is not a humour for me to act upon. You muſt be prepared, properly prepared by calmneſs and reflection, before your ſenſual eyes can behold an airy form—a departed ſpirit.

CLARANSFORTH.

Why, then, I have an appointment within an hour that will better than any thing elſe prepare me; for it is at one of the moſt retired and pious houſes in town, where nothing is ſeen but the pureſt manners.

AVA.

And what could induce you to viſit at ſuch a houſe?

CLARANSFORTH.

A pretty girl.

AVA.

Another pretty girl?

CLARANSFORTH.

Oh yes—I have a thouſand—but they are none of them to compare with her I have loſt;—and yet they muſt be my relief from the poignant ſenſe of my misfortune. And ſo, when I have been at the Quaker's, and compoſed myſelf, I'll come

come back to you—And you engage to ſhow me what you have promiſed?

AVA.

I do.

CLARANSPORTH.

I thank you.—Any amuſement, my dear Ava, to keep me from reflection. [*Exit.*

AVA.

No! rather will I bring you to reflection. [*Exit, on the oppoſite ſide.*

SCENE II. *The Houſe of* Timothy Starch.

Enter Ruth *and* Enſign Metland.

ENSIGN.

At length I have watched your father and mother from the houſe.—And now, Ruth, anſwer me—Is the report true of their intention to marry you to Mr. Claransforth?

RUTH.

It is their intention, but not my will.

ENSIGN.

Can you then contemn all the riches of Claransforth, and prepare to take a long journey, one that will laſt for life, in company with a poor man? Will you not be peeviſh, and lament, when the roads are bad, and the ups and downs of marriage cares jolt and joſtle you?

RUTH.

Not if they caſt me againſt the man I love;—for I would cleave unto him for ſupport; yea, verily, I would—and think hills and dales more pleaſant with him, than a ſmooth beaten way with any other.

ENSIGN.

Hark! I hear ſome one coming.—Perhaps your father! Let me retire into this room. [*Exit.*

Enter

Enter Claransforth *on the oppoſite ſide.*

CLARANSFORTH.

Beloved Ruth! I am not in ſpirits;—but your charms will revive me.

RUTH.

Neighbour Claransforth, I am in ſpirits;—but your preſence will depreſs them.

CLARANSFORTH.

My dear, enchanting, prim Ruth, where is your mother? where is your father? I hope they are well!—Where are they? [*Preſſes her hand.*]

RUTH.

I wiſh they were here, that they might reprove thee for thy impertinence.

CLARANSFORTH.

Impertinence!—Why, that's my love, my adoration of you.

RUTH.

Why doſt thou come to me, neighbour, to make profeſſions of thy affection? For thou doſt not love me, I can perceive by thy vacant eye, thy abſent thought, and careleſs manners. —Verily, theſe are no arguments of the lover.

CLARANSFORTH.

"Verily," what maketh thee ſuch a connoiſſeur in judging of love.

RUTH.

That which maketh a connoiſſeur in all the arts,—practice.

CLARANSFORTH.

Indeed!

RUTH.

Yea, friend.—Verily, from the firſt dawn of my underſtanding, I have had an ear for muſic, an eye for painting, a taſte for poetry, and a heart for love.

CLARANSFORTH.

I rejoice to hear it.

RUTH.

But not to love thee, friend.

CLARANSFORTH.

Whether me or not, the picture of yourſelf, which you have drawn, is ſo enchanting, it animates me to vow upon your lips. [*As he is going to ſalute her*—

Enter Rachel Starch.

RACHEL.

Neighbour Claransforth, neighbour Claransforth, is this neighbourly, thus to aſſail my daughter?

CLARANSFORTH.

Friend Starch, friend Starch, is this friendly, thus to come unwarily upon me?

RACHEL.

Doſt thou mean to make my daughter thy ſpouſe?—Say, inſtantly, yea or nay.

CLARANSFORTH.

Nay.

RACHEL.

And doſt thou mean, after thus dallying, to forſake her?

CLARANSFORTH.

Yea,

RACHEL.

Surely thou can'ſt not leave a maiden, whoſe grief at thy perfidy will continue all the days of her life.—She loves thee, Edward Claransforth, and has ſacrificed to thee her hopes of marriage with a man of fortune.—Who is now to become her ſupport? For her parents are poor, and can give her no portion.

CLARANSFORTH.

'Sdeath! [*Aſide, and moved.*]

RACHEL.

Would'ſt thou deſtroy all the proſpects of an innocent woman?

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

No, faith, I would not! I might, perhaps, love to do a little miſchief; but not a great deal, upon my honour, without thirſting to make atonement.—I have plunged in miſery one young woman—a repetition of the crime would be execrable. *Aſide.*] Neighbour Starch, if I have, by any incoherent expreſſions, miſled your daughter into an error, which has loſt her the proſpect of marrying a wealthy man, I will make all the atonement in my power, by giving her a fortune with any other whom ſhe may chooſe.—And I here pledge my word, that when you call upon me——

Enter Enſign Metland.

ENSIGN.

Hold, Sir!—make no raſh promiſes. That young woman has ſuffered no diſappointment on your account; but ſhe is conſtrained to ſilence.—Nor had ſhe ever a man of fortune for her ſuitor.—I am her only lover; and I am not worth a guinea.—Ruth! do you love this gentleman?

RUTH [*warmly*].

No.

ENSIGN.

Whom do you love?

RUTH.

Thee.

CLARANSFORTH.

Sir, you ennoble poverty.—I am moſt extremely obliged to you for the information you have given me; and I entreat you will favour me with your addreſs.

ENSIGN.

Pardon me—I wiſh the preſent meeting and converſation to be, from this day, forgotten;

particularly the part I have taken in it. This prejudiced woman will, I hope, ſoon perceive her miſtake; and that young woman will, I hope, ſoon be happily married. [*Exit.*

CLARANSFORTH.

But, Sir—[*calls after the* Enſign—*then turns to* Rachel]—Grant me the only favour I ſhall ever aſk of you—Tell me the name of that gentleman.

RACHEL.

He hath offended me, and I will not.—Follow me, Ruth Starch. [*Exit* Rachel—Ruth *following.*

CLARANSFORTH.

He mentioned his poverty: and if it were in my power to ſupply his wants——

Enter Timothy Starch.

TIMOTHY.

I met the military man now coming forth from this houſe?—What means he by ſtill viſiting—

CLARANSFORTH.

I forget that young officer's name—Pray, can you tell it me?

TIMOTHY.

Doſt thou mean the Enſign Metland, whom I now paſſed at my door?

CLARANSFORTH [*ſtarting*].

Metland! Metland!

TIMOTHY.

Yea; ſon to old Metland, who lately failed in trade, and now lives in a cottage in the City-road.

CLARANSFORTH.

Is he his ſon? [*Aſide.*] Oh! Oh! I had rather any one than him.—[*To* Timothy.] Are you ſure, certain, he is a ſon of Metland's?

TIMOTHY.

TIMOTHY.

Certain!—Metland has but one ſon, and one daughter.

CLARANSFORTH [*anxiouſly*].

And where is ſhe?

TIMOTHY.

That is not at the preſent time known. The damſel hath fled from one Mary Diamond, with whom ſhe lived, and has gone away with ſome vile man, who frequented that great and wicked houſe.

CLARANSFORTH.

Heavens! [*Aſide.*]—And, pray, when did you hear this ſtrange account?

TIMOTHY.

But now—at my own door.

CLARANSFORTH.

The brother did not ſeem acquainted with the news.

TIMOTHY.

He knew it not till this inſtant—when his weeping mother met him, and, in my hearing, requeſted him to go in ſearch of his ſiſter, and bring her home to her boſom, whether ſullied by the embraces of a ſeducer, or folded in the arms of death.

CLARANSFORTH.

Oh, dreadful!—And the mother lamenting in the ſtreets!

TIMOTHY.

Yea; it would have made thee weep to have liſtened to her lamentation. For my part, I ſeldom cry—and as ſeldom laugh.—I keep my paſſions cool and ſteady, as I keep my countenance.——What is the matter with thine?

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

Quaker, I am a murderer.—If the daughter of Metland be dead, as her mother apprehends, it is I who have cauſed her diſſolution.—It is I who ſeduced her from her home, and have been her murderer.—Where ſhall I hide myſelf from the load that oppreſſes me?

TIMOTHY.

Neighbour, thou muſt not hide thyſelf in my houſe. Why tarrieſt thou?—Depart!

CLARANSFORTH [*inattentive to* Timothy].

Yes; I'll add ſuicide to murder, and end my remorſe at once.

TIMOTHY [*going calmly up to him*].

And where would'ſt thou be buried, friend? Before thou committeſt the raſh act, to whom doſt thou bequeath the vaſt ſums of which thou art poſſeſſed? Whom doſt thou appoint thy pall-bearers? and what kind of tomb-ſtone would'ſt thou have erected to thy memory?

CLARANSFORTH.

Your iron heart brings me to myſelf.—While there is a hope my Ellen lives, I will live for her. Quaker, farewell! and, notwithſtanding all the agony I at this moment endure, I would not exchange my ſenſibility for your indifference.

[*Exit.*

TIMOTHY.

Verily, he ſpeaketh fooliſhneſs. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *An apartment at* Lady Mary's.

Enter Lady Mary, *followed by* Ellen.

ELLEN.

If I have ever been a truſty ſervant—if, during the whole time I have lived in your houſe, this

is

is my firſt offence—if I have always paid attention to your orders, and ſhown tenderneſs when ſickneſs took from you the power of command—if, till a fatal paſſion ſeiſed my heart, my duty to you was as ſtrictly fulfilled as that to my parents—if, repentance for my paſt fault, and promiſe of amendment, can make any atonement—oh! receive me again, and hide my failings from my father's knowledge!

LADY MARY.

Failings, indeed! A pretty ſoft term for robbing your miſtreſs, and paſſing the night with a profeſſed libertine.

ELLEN.

I did not.—I paſſed it under a ſhed, in ſight of my father's door, where I dared not rap. See—my cloaths have been drenched with rain, and my hair is ſtill damp.

LADY MARY.

And ſo your lover turned you out?

ELLEN.

No; he did not turn me out;—he meant to keep me ſecure—but I eſcaped.

LADY MARY.

Then return to him again; for, be aſſured, no one elſe will receive you.

ELLEN.

No; there is my laſt night's habitation ſtill left, and I will return there. [*Loitering.*] Yet, madam, though you refuſe to truſt me again yourſelf, you may not wholly deſpair that, in another ſervice, I may give proof of contrition, and retrieve my character. You will, then, perhaps, be ſo compaſſionate as not to reveal my indiſcretions; particularly not to complain of them to my family; but ſuffer me, as I am now

weak

weak with fatigue and ſorrow, to go home, as diſcharged by you this morning on account of ſickneſs.

LADY MARY.

A mighty pretty plan, and a very proper contriver you are, for the embelliſhment of a falſehood!—Would you have me impoſe you on your father and mother as innocent?—No! So far am I from ſuch impoſition, that, at midnight, when I found you did not come home, I went to them, to let them know you were gone off with a gentleman.

ELLEN.

Oh!

LADY MARY.

You may well ſigh and mourn!—If you had ſeen your poor mother—and if you had heard your father—he vowed never to pardon you—and ſaid, "Were you ever to come into his preſence"—

ELLEN.

I never dare.

LADY MARY.

And your poor mother!—She——

ELLEN.

Oh! tell me what my father ſaid!—I can bear his anger, his threats;—I can bear that they be put in execution—I can bear all—all things, but my mother's tears.

LADY MARY.

And you will not have them to bear long, if I may judge by her preſent grief.

ELLEN.

Madam, I take my leave—gladly go—for the piercing winds, ſtorms of hail and thunder, or the

the hooting of the rabble to a difcarded wanderer, would not be half fo wounding to my ears as your piercing words! [*Exit* Lady Mary.] Shall I follow, and kneel to her?—No! her heart is hard—every heart is hardened to me—and I, who never in my life did wrong to another, am myfelf loaded with injuries—that will drive me to diftraction! [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *An apartment at* Claransforth's.

Claransforth *discovered, leaning disconsolately on a sopha.*

Enter Bankwell, *and goes slowly to him.*

BANKWELL.

I AM sorry to see you so out of spirits.—Surely something very particular!

CLARANSFORTH.

Yes, it is.

BANKWELL.

Lost a great sum, perhaps?

CLARANSFORTH.

I wish I had.

BANKWELL.

I am glad you have not.

CLARANSFORTH.

Sir, you know nothing of my concerns beyond the counting-house; nor will I suffer you to be a spy.——

BANKWELL.

I beg your pardon.—I did not come as a spy upon your sorrows. I come merely to deliver a message.—A person, who is waiting below, requests a few minutes' conversation with you.

CLARANSFORTH.

Not now.—I can see no one at present.

BANKWELL.

BANKWELL.

I was afraid ſo—And I would not have aſked at this time for any one, except the perſon in queſtion.—But I was ſorry to give the old man the trouble of coming again.

CLARANSFORTH.

Oh, if it's the old Indian, you may admit him.

BANKWELL.

No, Sir—it is old Mr. Metland.

CLARANSFORTH [*ſtarts*].

He!—Old Metland. [*Fearfully.*] What does he want?

BANKWELL.

—That he wiſhes to tell *you*.

CLARANSFORTH.

No, I can't ſee him. I won't ſee him. I am aſhamed to ſee him.—[*Aſide.*] Aſhamed to ſee a man! Then am I degraded beneath one.—I will have courage, and endure his reproaches.

BANKWELL.

Did you give me an anſwer, Sir?

CLARANSFORTH [*affecting indifference*].

Yes—deſire Mr. Metland to walk in.—Show him in.

While Bankwell *goes out,* Claranſforth *ſhews marks of extreme embarraſſment and confuſion.*

Bankwell *re-enters, with* Metland, *and retires immediately.*

Metland *bows humbly to* Claranſforth.—Claranſforth's *confuſion increaſes.*

CLARANSFORTH.

Mr. Metland; you do me much——Will you pleaſe to ſit?

METLAND.

No, I thank you, Sir. The buſineſs on which I come will ſoon be over. I do not mean to detain

tain you, Sir, more than a few minutes; therefore I will proceed without ceremony. [*Takes from his pocket the notes, just as they were found in the private drawer, and lays them on the table which is ſtanding before them.*] This money is yours.

CLARANSFORTH.

Mine! [*Surpriſed.*] You to me,—money!

METLAND.

You may, perhaps, have heard, that, on the day your father died, I brought him a ſum of money which could not be found.

CLARANSFORTH.

I heard ſo, with concern.

METLAND.

After the fatal accident, which at that time we had to lament, I received, as a keep-ſake, in memory of my friend, your father's writing-deſk.—Your clerk, Bankwell, remembers the circumſtance.

CLARANSFORTH.

Probably.

METLAND.

In this writing-deſk, a ſecret drawer was, yeſterday, by mere chance, diſcovered.—It contained twelve thouſand pounds, which, conformable to my conſcience, I deliver up to you.

CLARANSFORTH.

To me!—Mr, Metland!—to me!—Why to me?

METLAND.

Becauſe the writing-deſk belonged to you; and becauſe your truſtees and executors, when they gave it me, were unacquainted with the treaſure it contained.

CLARANSFORTH.

Twelve thouſand pounds.—Is not that the amount

amount of the ſum which you entruſted to my father?

METLAND.

Exactly.

CLARANSFORTH.

It muſt then, of courſe, be your own money.

METLAND.

Mr. Claransforth, I know it to be my own;—and yet the manner in which I recovered it impoſed a reſtraint upon my duty, not to conſider it ſuch, till you had acknowledged it mine.

CLARANSFORTH [*aſide*].

Good heaven! what a family have I wronged.—Dear Sir, heſitate not a moment to take it back! [*returning the money.*]

METLAND.

You are then convinced, upon the word of an honeſt man, that this is my property.

CLARANSFORTH.

I am convinced—I could not think otherwiſe.

METLAND [*putting the notes up*].

I thank you!

CLARANSFORTH.

And be aſſured, Mr. Metland, that I rejoice; and am more happy at this event than if I had ſaved my moſt valuable ſhips from wreck.

METLAND.

I ſee my old friend is ſtill alive.—Once more I ſincerely thank you, dear Sir, for your generoſity—although I am not, from ſome family afflictions, exactly in the ſtate to enjoy it.

CLARANSFORTH [*trembling*].

What afflictions!—may I venture to aſk?

METLAND.

Ah! you are a young man, and an unmarried man!—You have never yet experienced either the

the joys or the ſorrows of a huſband and father. [*Struggling to conceal his tears.*]

CLARANSFORTH.

But I can ſympathiſe.

METLAND.

No doubt you can.—But ſympathy to one, like me, caſt down—wounded in the tendereſt part.———But I beg your pardon, I have no right to trouble you with my griefs.—Yet they will, at times burſt forth, in defiance of reſiſtance, in defiance of good manners.———And now they have almoſt made me forget part of my errand.—Here is a letter, Sir, I found in the ſecret drawer of which I have been ſpeaking. It is your father's hand-writing, and addreſſed to you. [*Gives it, and is going.*]

CLARANSFORTH.

A letter in my father's own hand! It may relate to the money you have brought.—Stay, and hear me read it.

METLAND.

If it 's your pleaſure.

CLARANSFORTH.

With reverence I break the honored ſeal, and will faithfully perform whatever he has commanded.—[*Reads*] "My deareſt ſon—this let-
"ter you will not receive till you have loſt
"your father, and I write to point out to you
"where to chooſe another.—Metland the elder
"has been my friend for many years. I wiſh
"him to be yours by the tie of relationſhip:—
"His daughter, in every endowment, reſembles
"your deceaſed mother.—I was happy in the
"marriage ſtate.—That you may be ſo, I recom-
"mend to you Ellen Metland for a wife. [*He*
"*ſhows great emotion.*] Accept of this, my laſt ad-
"vice,

" vice, as you wish me peace in my grave.—
" With the hope thaty ou will, I give my bleſ-
" ſing to you both.

" Edward Claransforth."

[*After reading the letter*, Metland *and* Claransforth *ſtand for ſome time fixed and ſilent.*

METLAND [*after an effort*].

—Mr. Claransforth, you ſee before you a poor old father, ſunk to the earth with ſhame, diſappointment, and ſorrow.—When your beneficent parent wrote that letter, I had a daughter —now I have none.—[*Burſting into a fit of tears*] For ſhe has abandoned me and her mother—abandoned herſelf.——Oh! good young man! [*taking him by hand*] ſhe is unworthy of *you*—A villain has ſeduced her—has deſtroyed that virtuous being who was the pride of her parents, and might have been the happineſs of a huſband.

CLARANSFORTH.

He!—that villain!—falls on his knees before you, and entreats for mercy.——Metland, I ſaw your daughter, and, not knowing her to be yours, by my arts ſeduced her from her friends; but in vain all my attempts to allure her from virtue.—Wherever ſhe is, ſhe is pure as her guardian angel. She fled my careſſes—And, on the oath of a repentant libertine—ſhe is virtuous.

METLAND.

Audacious profligate!—But tell me where ſhe is, that I may fly—Where is my child?

Enter Ava Thoanoa.

AVA.

Thy child lies on a ſick bed, attended by phyſicians, who deſpair of reſtoring her to health, ſo powerfully has affliction viſited both mind and body.

METLAND.

METLAND.

And yet I truſt ſhe will not die!—Heaven is all merciful, and will preſerve mine and my poor wife's ſenſes!—What friend to me has opened his door to a hapleſs wanderer?

AVA.

I—in my purſuit of the afflicted, I met her in a ſtate of ſorrow, bordering on diſtraction, and had her inſtantly conveyed to my apartments.—This is the addreſs where you will find her. [*Gives a card.*] Keep it private, except to your own family.

METLAND.

Bleſs you, kind Sir, the way is ſhort, and yet it will ſeem tedious. [*Going.*]

CLARANSFORTH [*who had thrown himſelf diſtractedly on a ſopha during the laſt ſpeech*].

Metland!—do not leave me without your forgiveneſs!

METLAND.

Villain! dread an injured father's wrath!

[*Exit.*

CLARANSFORTH [*to* AVA].

Read that letter—You know the hand.—In aggravation of my guilt, it is my wife, the wife to whom my father ſecretly betrothed me, that I have thrown an outcaſt on the world.—Indian, I believe you—I now firmly believe all you have told me! My father's ſpirit cannot reſt while his laſt will is directly violated, and I have the curſes of thoſe pious parents whom he hoped would bleſs me.—I am this inſtant at the criſis of my fate; and, if thou haſt ſpoken truth, precipitate me at once to better or worſe, by ſhowing me my father.

AVA [*after a pauſe*].

You are unworthy of the promiſe I made you; but

but my word has more weight with me than your offences.—Follow me to my lodgings.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The lodgings of* Ava Thoanoa.

Enter two Servants, *meeting.—One with lights, which he puts down.*

First Servant.

Is my maſter returned?

Second Servant.

No; but I expect him every moment—and I hope he will come ſoon, for we have had ſuch a number of cards and viſitors. [*Putting cards on the table.—A rap at the door.*]

Enter Ava *and* Claransforth.

Ava.

Who have called ſince I have been abroad?

[Servants *whiſper him, and exeunt.*]

Your maſculine vice is joined to feminine weakneſs:—You have prated of the art which I communicated to you, as a ſecret, and every goſſip and adventurer in town apply to me, as a conjuror, to reſolve their queſtions.

Claransforth.

I own I mentioned your pretended art at Lady Mary Diamond's, and, I believe, at the houſe of one Starch, a Quaker.—But I would have been ſecret, had you enjoined ſecrecy.

Ava.

Truth requires none.—But here's Lady Mary Diamond, and two or three more, my ſervants inform me, ſhut up in ſeparate rooms, till I have done with you:—they do not ſeek truth, but falſehood.

Claransforth.

But come, before you undeceive them, ſatisfy my curioſity.

AVA.

Are you prepared? [*Solemnly*] Do you think your courage will not fail you at the ſight of your father?

CLARANSFORTH.

I ſhould ſink to the earth were I to behold him:—But, confident that I ſhall not—I defy both him and you.

AVA.

Then to the trial.—Stand firmly, and keep your eye fixed on that entrance—that door.

CLARANSFORTH.

Very well—I do.

AVA.

Would you ſee him alone, or ſhall I ſtay with you?

CLARANSFORTH.

Alone!

AVA.

I'll ſend him to you, then, immediately.

CLARANSFORTH.

No, hold!—you ſhall ſtay by me. I'll have no impoſition.—You ſhall not go, and move a puppet from behind a curtain.—Stay by me, and call him to come forth.

AVA.

I muſt repeat the words of the charm in private: then I'll return, and he ſhall follow me.

[*Exit.*

CLARANSFORTH.

How powerful is the effect of imagination!—The haraſſed ſtate of my mind—my remorſe—night—and, above all, the venerable aſpect of this man, and the ſolemn language of his fictions, put me in a tremor.

Enter a perſon, who, in appearance, exactly repreſents Ava Thoanoa.

CLARANS-

CLARANSFORTH.

Well!

The ſuppoſed Ava *holds up his hand to enjoin ſilence: then turns towards the door, on which he and* Claransforth *fix their eyes, with an anxious watchfulneſs, when* Claransforth *(the father) enters ſlow and ſtately.—The younger* Claransforth *appears amazed, and ſhocked.—The elder* Claransforth *ſtands fixed.*

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger [*after a pauſe*].

It is the exact figure of my father—Exact—and almoſt makes me tremble.—Admirable deception!—ſurpriſing ingenuity!—wonderful art!—Detain him—don't let him diſappear—let me ſurvey him nearer firſt. [Claransforth *the* Elder *walks forward.*] Excellent piece of mechaniſm!—I could even talk or kneel to that form.—'Tis moſt ſurpriſing! and childiſh prejudices will cling about me.—Yet, that you are not a ghoſt, I am certain.—But what, in the name of wonder, are you?——

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

I am he whom you miſtook for Ava, the Indian.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger.

Ah! my good friend Ava, himſelf, in the ſhape of my father.—Then what is this figure? He muſt be a ghoſt for certain?—[*Goes up to the perſon who repreſents* Ava.—*This perſon takes off his beard, &c. and diſcovers himſelf to be* Bankwell.]—Bankwell engaged in a trick upon me! Then I ſee, I underſtand it all.—That is not the Indian in my father's form.—It was my father who put on the Indian's—my living father, who but feigned to die, that he might have the means to ſearch into all the frailties of his ſon.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

Your conjecture is right—and he will puniſh thoſe frailties. For do not think, becauſe I have deſcended to practice an idle deception on you, that I mean to fool on.—This trifling was but to fulfil the promiſe I was provoked to make by your ſceptic diſcourſe. [Claransforth *the* Younger *falls on his knees.*]—No, Sir! no pardon from me—

[*Enter* Metland, *and* Enſign Metland]

—till you have received it here.

METLAND.

I am in aſtoniſhment—Is it poſſible?—Do I behold Claransforth, my former friend?

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

Say your *preſent* friend—more firmly yours than ever.

METLAND.

Amazement!

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

My friend, I have watched you and your family, through all your ſorrows, all your meritorious conduct, beneath the wrong I did you, and which it ſhall be now my happineſs to repair.—I have watched all thoſe, too, whom I equally loved; and I have found the far greater number, ſuch as make this world more dear, than when, in the midſt of my houſe, in flames, my danger brought to my recollection a ſecret paſſage, by which I preſerved my life—yet preſerved it with ſuch hazard, that you all thought me dead. This gave, to my curious and ſuſpicious nature, an opportunity which I could not reſiſt.—Bankwell alone has been my confidant;—by his means, I have been enabled to prove all your hearts; and, I rejoice to ſay that, except in one inſtance,

inſtance, I have been delighted by the experiment.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger.

I am the exception.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

You are.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger.

And, yet, how I have ſinned againſt my duty to my father is, to myſelf, unknown;—for the inmoſt receſſes of my heart cannot reproach me with the want of filial love.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

You have ſinned againſt heaven and your neighbour.—I take thoſe injuries on myſelf.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger.

But heaven is merciful.—So ſometimes is man. [*Enter* Ellen, *leaning on her* Mother.]——Ellen, would'ſt thou forgive me?

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

Dar'ſt thou aſk it?

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger.

Is there any other way to obtain forgiveneſs?—If you will inſtruct me in any other, whatever is the penalty, I will ſubmit to it.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

Metland! my friend—can you ever look on this man as your ſon?

METLAND.

I can look on him as *yours*—and, as ſuch, forgive him.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

——But the reſt of your family—

Mrs. METLAND.

I love, by my huſband's example.

ENSIGN.

And I will regard him by my ſiſters.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

Young woman, whom I have retrieved from deſperation, and whom, from your childhood, I have loved as my own—do not deceive me.—Can you forgive this man? Can you be thoroughly reconciled to him? Could you take him for a huſband?

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger *goes to her, and kneels.*

ELLEN.

While heaven remits its puniſhment on my offence, can I be rigorous to others?

CLARANSFORTH *the* Younger.

I will deſerve the confidence you place in me.—I will deſerve to be related to this family, whoſe virtues I have proved.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

And now take my hand.—For while you retain all your virtuous diſpoſitions, and will baniſh all your vicious ones——

Enter Ruth Starch.

RUTH.

Doth one Ava Thoanoa abide in this houſe?

ENSIGN.

Ruth!—What can bring you here?

RUTH.

I came to aſk the fortune-teller, If I ſhould ever be thy wife?

Enter Rachel *and* Timothy Starch.

RACHEL.

Timothy! It is as I have ſaid unto thee; here is the ſoldier and thy daughter in cloſe communication.

RUTH.

RUTH.

Mother, I came not here to ſee the ſoldier, but to hear tidings of him from the ſorcerer who keepeth the houſe.

RACHEL.

A ſorcerer! Woe be unto him! Which is he?

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

If I may aſſume the myſtery of fortune-telling, this young man and woman [*pointing to the* Enſign *and* Ruth] would be happy in marriage, if they could gain their friends' conſent.

METLAND.

Whatever will render my ſon happy, I ſhall not oppoſe.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

My neighbour Starch, what ſay you?

TIMOTHY.

Neighbour Claransforth, they told me thou wert dead!—but thou art not, I find.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

I am permitted to reviſit this world, to diſpoſe of my riches worthily; and I mean to give this young Enſign a fortune, in addition to that which his father will give him.

TIMOTHY.

But, Ruth, what ſay'ſt thou to this man?

RUTH.

Verily, I ſhould like to become unto this man ſuch as my mother became unto thee.

TIMOTHY.

Then, take her, young man.—But I ſay unto thee, love her only with that diſcreet love with which I have lov'd her mother—and which made me content to marry her, and would have made me equally content if I had not.

RACHEL.

RACHEL.

And, verily, this is the ſort of prudent love which I bear unto thee.

CLARANSFORTH *the* Elder.

What various manners and paſſions have I witneſſed ſince my diſguiſe gave me the power of judgment on the failings of my neighbours!—I now, in my turn, am to be judged;—and, in order to ſupport the title of a Wiſe Man, I moſt humbly ſubmit my character to the approbation, or cenſure, of—Wiſer Heads than my own.

THE END.

EPILOGUE.

WRITTEN BY JOHN TAYLOR, ESQ.

Spoken by Mrs. H. JOHNSTONE, in the Character of RUTH.

FRIENDS, peradventure, ye may deem it ſtrange,
That, from my peaceful ſect, I thus ſhould range,
And chuſe to join in wedlock, undiſmay'd,
A ſuitor in terrific red array'd.
But, verily, my feelings to confeſs,
I truſt when marry'd he'll put off that dreſs.
And when my loving helpmate ſhall require,
I, too, perchance, may caſt off this attire.
Beſides, as he expounds his martial creed,
True heroes are of Nature's nobleſt breed,
Who hazard all to cruſh the foes of Peace,
That wicked ſtrife 'twixt human-kind may ceaſe.
If ſo, this ſoldier well my hand may claim—
Our modes may differ, but our view's the ſame:
And tho' in marriage he ſhould hold a truce,
And turn his ſword to ſome domeſtic uſe,
Yet ſince his purpoſe with my doctrines ſuits,
I e'en may give him leave to raiſe recruits.
But there are beings who in war delight,
Bleſt when a poet's blooming hopes they blight,
Like their old ſire, the ſerpent, prone to hiſs,
And always on the watch to poiſon bliſs——
Critics, I think, they're call'd,—a reſtleſs crew,
Who ſtrike, inſtinctively, at all that's new.

Now, tho' our tribe, averſe to hoſtile harm,
Bids man in ire ne'er liſt his fleſhy arm;
Yet if theſe critics come to damn the play,
'Twill be but right to buffet them away.

There's a kind rule of action, as I hear,
Term'd Gallantry, which generous minds revere;
Meaning, no doubt, when ſtript of vain parade,
That manly ſtrength ſhould female weakneſs aid.
Oh! may that courteous rule each boſom move
Our ſiſter author's labour to approve:
For ſince to mend the heart that labour tends,
Ye all, to-night, ſhould prove a SECT *of Friends.*

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